Cooperation

Testifying in the trial of Rosemary D. Powers, charged in Alexandria with the murder of her husband, Alexandria Police Chief Major Russell A. Hawes said Mrs. Powers at first cooperated with police who were investigating the crime. Then suddenly her attitude changed, he said. "She was refusing to cooperate with us, even to the extent of hiring a lawyer."

What a world of police misunderstanding is revealed in this simple observation! The notion that a defendant is uncooperative if she seeks the assistance of counsel while undergoing police interrogation probably pervades every police station in America. Yet such assistance is her absolute constitutional right; and the Constitution sets her wholly free from any obligation to cooperate in her own conviction. Here is a striking illustration of the reasons why police interrogation of suspects ought always to be rigorously circumscribed by the law and jealously supervised by the courts.